



Ham radio operators come in all ages and two of the youngest licensed in Appleton are Dick Schulze, 16, left and Don Schlafke, 17, right, both avid amateur radio men. They are shown in front of a set in the radio room at Appleton High school. (Post-Crescent Photo).

## 'Ham' Operators Range From Youths to Vets

### Amateur Radio Permits Held by About 20 Men in Appleton

There are numerous kinds of hobby bugs running around loose but one of the hardest biting types is that that bites "ham radio operators."

There are about 20 licensed hams in Appleton and they range from high school youths to men who have been dabbling in radio for 30 years.

Walter C. Pribnow, physics teacher at Appleton High school, has a group of high school boys interested in radio work headed by Dick Schulze, Greenville, and Don Schlafke, Appleton, both of whom hold licenses. The two boys now have their own call letters pending in Washington.

The federal communications commission and the American Radio Relay league set up a series of tests which each applicant must pass before he gets a license. The tests are mainly on sending and radio theory.

There are five classifications,

novice, technician, conditional, advanced and extra advanced. Each ham must pass stiffer tests and is allowed greater privileges as he progresses. For example, the novice is allowed to use code on the 75 meter band and phone on the high frequency bands only. The license is good for one year. Men classed as conditional must be able to send 13 words per minute and the extra advanced must turn out 20 words per minute.

#### Started In 1919

Harvey "Hub" Schroeder, a radio repairman, probably is one of the oldest hams in point of service in Appleton, starting with a crystal detector and an old spark coil back in 1919. He read an article on Marconi's experiments with the wireless and got interested, he said.

With his original set, Schroeder could reach out about 30 miles, depending on conditions, he said. He used to talk regularly to other hams in Green Bay, Oshkosh and Manitowoc.

The veteran now has a 50 watt transmitter and an 8-tube receiver which he built himself 14 years ago. With that set ensconced in the corner of his bedroom, he has been able to reach every continent in the world.

His biggest thrill came around 1922 or 1923, he recalls, when a man named McMillan was exploring the north pole for a radio corporation. Schroeder picked up a McMillan call on his set and took a 64 word message from the explorer asking for more equipment.

Schroeder relayed the call to Chicago.

George Merkle is another enthusiastic ham who has been at the game 22 years. He got his introduction to amateur radio from Schroeder. He has talked to about 70 countries as far as 1,500 miles away and estimates that there are

over 75,000 hams in the United States alone.

Merkle mentioned a Hilbert farmer, Herman Greves, who has a huge antenna and a powerful set and who has contacted over 200 countries in one weekend.

Communication with foreign lands presents little difficulty as most foreigners with radio sets have a knowledge of English. If they don't speak English, Q signals, a sort of international code, are used.

Schroeder estimates that the cost of his hobby in the more than 30 years he has pursued it has amounted to \$2,000 to \$3,000. Considering what photography enthusiasts, hunters and fishermen spend, it isn't too expensive a hobby.

During World war II all hams were off the air — on their own word of honor. Of course all wave lengths were monitored and any ham who violated his promise would have gotten into hot water, but quick.

Hams are quick to point out that they are not responsible for TV interference, published reports to the contrary. They admit a slight amount of interference may be caused by operators but not the amount ascribed to them. At present a feud seems to be simmering between hams and owners of TV sets, the TV owners crying out that the hams are ruining the reception and the hams denying it and retaliating with the attitude of "we were here first, to heck with 'em'".

But come what may, the thrill of talking to far off lands and the possibility of getting in on some dramatic happening via the sound waves probably will continue to attract new ham operators every year.